

BUILDING SAFETY NEWS—MAY 2013

FIRST CLASS CITY • FIRST CLASS SERVICE

—The Building Safety Department is committed to advancing public safety in the built environment through collaboration and community partnership which results in safe, accessible, and healthy structures—

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NOTICE

This fall SEMCO (Southeast Minnesota Code Officials) will be sponsoring a code seminar. Check the SEMCO website for further details at www.semco.ambo-icc.org

REMINDERS

- BUILDING SAFETY PHONE NUMBER IS 328-2600
- BUILDING SAFETY OFFICE HOURS ARE 8:00AM TO 5:00PM
- CHECK INSPECTION RESULTS 24/7 BY GOING TO [CITIZEN.ACCESS](http://CITIZEN.ACCESS.ROCHESTERMN.GOV) at ROCHESTERMN.GOV UNDER THE BUILDING SAFETY DEPARTMENT DROPDOWN MENU
- CHECK YOUR SMOKE DETECTORS EACH MONTH—REPLACE BATTERIES EACH YEAR
- <http://www.rochestermn.gov>

SPRING 2013 - BUILDING SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Code Officials Keep You Safe

**BUILDING SAFETY MONTH**INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL
MAY 2013

The Building Safety Month campaign helps to improve public safety by increasing awareness about how building codes and code officials improve and protect the places where we live, learn, work, worship and play.

Each year, in observance of Building Safety Month, Americans are asked to consider projects to improve building safety and sustainability at home and in the community, and to acknowledge the essential service provided to all of us by local and state building departments and federal agencies in protecting lives and property.



In October 2011 the Building Safety Department issued a building permit to Weis Builders for the new Lourdes High School. The structure was completed at the end of April 2013 and is ready for temporary occupancy for furnishings and final testing of all systems.

Since the inception of construction in 2011, the Building Safety Department has performed well over 375 inspections. Which included most aspects of the structure from electrical, hydronics, mechanical (HVAC), gas-piping, plumbing and building. Rochester Fire Prevention also performed inspections for the sprinkler systems, fire alarms and extinguishers. Olmsted County Health Department completed the inspections for the kitchen and dining areas for compliance of the health codes.

HOUSING INSPECTIONS SERVICES TEAM

Steve Zuelke

Steve has been with the City of Rochester Building Safety Department as a Building Inspector since 2012; previously, he worked for the City of Winona as a residential/commercial building inspector for 12 years. Steve has his State of Minnesota Building Official Certification, ICC Residential/Commercial Plumbing Inspector certification and 15 years of experience in the residential/commercial building industry.

Ric Budahl

Ric has been with the City of Rochester Building Safety Department as a Building Inspector since May 2011. He has 20 years of experience in commercial construction, 11 years as a Building Inspector and has been certified as a MN Building Official since 2004. He has a Building Inspection Technology Certification, ICC Plans Examiner certification, IAPMO Mechanical Inspector certification, and is certified as a ICC Commercial Building Inspector 2008



L to R: Steve Zuelke, Ric Budahl, Curt Buller,
Susan LeGare-Gulden,

Curt Buller

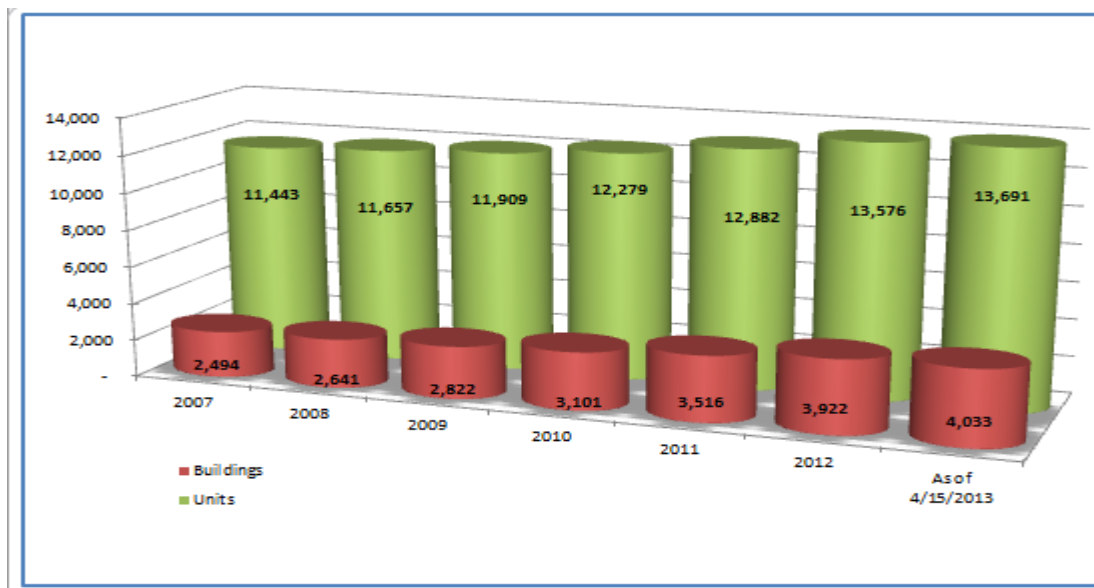
Curt has been with the City of Rochester Building Safety Department as a Building Inspector since 2005. Curt has 20 years of experience in the construction field as a Minnesota Master Plumber, 6 years of experience as a commercial and residential property manager and 7 ½ years as a rental housing inspector for the City of Rochester. Curt has a Minnesota Master Plumber license and a Minnesota Special Engineer Boiler license.

Susan LeGare-Gulden

Susan has been an inspector with the City of Rochester Building Safety Department in the Housing Division since January 1991. She is certified as ICC Property Maintenance Inspector since 2005 and is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist since 1987. In August of 2008 Susan was promoted as a Manager of Housing Inspections Division. She previously worked at the Olmsted County Health Department as a plans examiner and health inspector for three years and worked as an Environmental Health Director serving Faribault, Martin and Watonwan counties.

RENTAL HOUSING IN ROCHESTER

The Housing Division has felt the economic ramifications of the housing market in the last 5 years. With foreclosures at an all-time high, the growth of the rental market within the City of Rochester which includes the 2008 annexation has nearly doubled the rental licenses during this same time period. Below is a table that shows the growth of the rental housing market in Rochester since 2007.



The Housing Division is also responsible for investigating a variety of complaints that may include unregistered rentals, inoperable automobiles, vacant properties and unsafe living conditions.

OFFICE SERVICES TEAM

Ruthie Baier

Ruthie is an Administrative Assistant II with the Building Safety Department. She has been with the City of Rochester since 1989. Ruthie's primary responsibility is working with the Inspection Division by coordinating and processing the residential and commercial trade permits.

Lori Jones

Lori joined the Building Safety Department as an Administration Assistant II in 2012. Her primary responsibility is working with the Housing Division by helping new landlords register their property and scheduling biennial inspections. Prior to joining the department, Lori was involved with the construction industry as well as a property manager for the past seven years.

Jacki Niedfeldt

Jacki is a part time clerical with the Housing Division since October 2007. She has worked at Bishop Management as an office assistant and during the summer she volunteers as a cook for Camp Victory.

Vickie Ranvek

Vickie has been with the Building Safety Department as an Administration Assistant II since 2000. Her primary responsibility is working with the Plan Review and Permitting Division. She assists homebuilders with questions, providing brochures, maintaining our building files and preparing plans to go in line for review.

Diana Kling

Diana is the Office Services Coordinator for the Building Safety Department. She began her duties in 2005. Diana's primary responsibilities are updating the website, payroll, accounts payable, commercial and grading projects, Accela and assisting department personnel and the public with various inquiries.



L to R: Ruthie Baier, Lori Jones, Jacki Niedfeldt,
Vickie Ranvek, Diana Kling

TRADE PERMIT APPLICATIONS

In an effort to process trade permits in a timely manner, contractors must fill out the applications correctly and completely. If the trade permit is associated to a building permit, please obtain the building permit number from the general contractor or look the number up using Citizen Access. The permit type and work category should be checked. Also, the description of work and location should be very detailed so we know exactly where and what work is being completed. We do appreciate when building and trade permits that are submitted with all the correct information and completely filled out.

Applications submitted complete and with accurate information will assist the clerks in processing trade permit in a timely manner. This will help you be able to schedule trade inspections and keep your project on schedule.

SOLAR—PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SYSTEMS

Permit Requirements:

Electrical permits are required for the installation of PV systems, whether they are attached to the structure or free standing. A building permit may be required, dependent upon a flush-mounted, non-flush-mounted or free standing system.

Zoning and Land Use Requirements.

Zoning approval may also be required for Solar-Photovoltaic.

Required Inspections:

The permit holder(s) will be responsible for scheduling inspections with Building Safety.

Electrical inspections: Rough-in, Underground, Concrete encased electrode, Final Inspection.

Building inspections: Footing and Foundation, Framing, Final Inspection.

A certificate of completion may be obtained from Building Safety after all inspections have been approved.

See our website for the complete Photovoltaic (PV) systems handout.



APPLIANCE REPLACEMENT INSTALLATIONS

The Building code states, “An owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace any gas, mechanical, electrical, plumbing system, or other equipment, the installation of which is regulated by the code; or cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the Building Safety Department and obtain the required permit.”

A permit is required for all installations that are regulated by the code, and these installations cannot begin until the permit has been issued. A permit is required for the installation, replacement, alteration, or modification of mechanical systems and components that are contained in the scope of the applicability of the code. Replacement of an existing piece of equipment or related piping is treated no differently than a new installation in new building construction. An existing appliance is defined as, “Any appliance regulated by this code which was legally installed prior to the effective date of this code, or for which a permit to install has been issued.” This definition creates a distinction between legally existing appliances and illegally existing appliances. Any appliance that is installed without a permit is not a legally existing appliance. An appliance that was illegally installed prior to the effective date of the code is not considered existing, but is “new”, and therefore subject to enforcement of the requirements for new installations.

Except for emergency installations, appliance replacements completed without first obtaining the required permits is a violation of the code. If equipment replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted to the Building Safety Department within the next working business day. This allows for prompt installations for situations where equipment and appliance replacements and repairs are completed to address an emergency situation.

If work for which a permit is required by the code has commenced without first obtaining a permit, a special investigation must be made before a permit may be issued for the work. An investigation fee shall be collected and is in addition to the required permit fee. This section is intended to serve as a deterrent to proceeding with work on a mechanical system without a permit. This section does not intend to penalize a contractor called upon to complete emergency work after hours if he or she promptly applies for a permit the following business day and has the required inspections performed.

The person doing the work authorized by a permit shall notify the Building Safety Department that the work is ready for inspection. The person requesting an inspection required by the code shall provide access to and means for inspection of the work. This means the permit holder is responsible for coordinating the inspection in order to prevent work from being concealed before it has been inspected and for arranging for access with the occupant. In order to coordinate an inspection time, the permit holder may contact the Inspector on the morning of the scheduled inspection.

In summary, a permit is required for all appliance installations that are regulated by the code, these installations cannot begin until the permit has been issued. If appliance installations must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted to



the Building Safety Department the next business day. For appliance installations which have started without first obtaining a permit, a special investigation must be made before a permit can be issued for the work, the investigation fee (in addition to the required permit fee) will be collected from the person doing the work. The permit holder is responsible for coordinating inspections and for arranging access to the appliance with the occupant. In order to coordinate an inspection time, the permit holder may contact the Inspector on the morning of the scheduled inspection.

Code Reference: Minnesota Rules 1300.0120. Subpart 1, Required (permits). 1300.120, Subpart 5. Emergency repairs. 1300.0120, Subpart 14. Responsibility. 1300.0160, Subpart 8. Work commencing before permit issuance. 1300.210, Subpart 4. Inspection requests.

COMMERCIAL PLAN REVIEW (Incomplete submittals) What is needed in order to begin the process?

The plan review process begins with submittal of a building permit application, required drawings and documents directly to the Building Safety Department. For a list of submittal requirements, please see the 'BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION PROCEDURE' on the Building Safety website or visit the Building Safety Department office to obtain a "hard copy" of this procedure.

In order for the plan review process to begin, 3 sets of architectural, structural, plumbing, mechanical, gas-piping and electrical drawings (and/or calculations) must be submitted for review. Please note, that the plan review process will not begin, until all required permit applications and drawings have been received.

The building official or designee, may waive the submission of construction documents for any "trades", if the nature of the work applied for, is such that reviewing of construction documents is not necessary to obtain compliance with the particular code in question, or if the work is small enough where plans are not needed for review. This exception must be approved by Building Safety staff, at the time of submittal of plans for review. The applicant will be notified at the front counter if additional drawings are required.

When a building permit application is submitted without drawings from a trade contractor or engineer, the plan review process will be delayed, until plans are submitted. Once the package is completely submitted, the permit application, along with the submitted plans, will be placed 'in-line' for review. This process will take approximately three to four weeks, depending on the size of the project and number of projects in-line at the time. This process is not the same as the "phased partial permit" process. The applicant may choose to phase their project, by applying for permits and submitting drawings/calculations for that particular component (i.e. footings/foundations).

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS REQUIRED—PERMITS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF PROJECTS

Building Outside

- Decks over 30" above grade and/or attached to the house
- Any decks with an attached roof
- Deck replacement (call Building Safety to verify)
- Patio covers, awnings (non-retractable)
- Carports
- Fences over 6 feet
- Retaining wall greater than 4 feet (measured from the bottom of footing)
- Reroof (call Building Safety to verify)
- Residing (call Building Safety to verify)
- Additions/alterations (call Building Safety to verify)
- Attached and detached garages
- Accessory buildings larger than 120 sq. feet
- Patio enclosures & screened porches
- Foundation repairs (call Building Safety to verify)
- Demolition
- Storm/Fire damage(call Building Safety to verify)

Building Inside (Any alteration or addition to the interior)

- Remodeling and basement finishes (adding or removing walls, insulation, electrical, mechanical or plumbing)
- Replacement of egress windows or safety glazing
- Installing a new window or door in a new opening
- Installing a skylight
- Foundation repairs (call Building Safety to verify)

Electrical

- Underground electric
- Add/replace/repair electric service
- Pools, spas, hot tubs and other similar installations
- Auxiliary wind, solar and photo voltaic power sources
- Replacement of light fixtures (call Building Safety to verify)
- Installation of light, heat or power (such as receptacles, electric baseboard)
- Extension or modification of a branch circuit
- A/C and furnace replacements

Plumbing

- Water and waste lines for plumbing systems
- Replacement of faucets, water closets, sinks (if new plumbing lines are installed) tankless water heaters, water heaters
- New lawn sprinkler systems
- Pools, spas, hot tubs and other similar installations
- New gas lines
- For more details on plumbing projects please visit our website & look under informational brochures

Mechanical

- New bath fans
- Installation or replacement of boilers, water heater, furnaces and tankless water heaters, air conditioners, fireplaces
- Fire Pits (call the Rochester Fire prevention Bureau at 507-328-2800)

This is not a complete list of all types of projects, please contact Building Safety at 507-328-2600 with any questions regarding your building project or go to our website <http://www.rochestermn.gov/departments/bldgsafety>

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS NOT REQUIRED—PERMITS ARE NOT REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF PROJECTS**Building Outside**

- Decks less than 30" above grade and not attached to the house
- Storage sheds 120 square feet or less with no electrical, plumbing or mechanical
- Gazebos 120 square feet or less with no electrical, plumbing or mechanical
- Driveways, sidewalks and concrete patios
- Painting
- Repair or maintenance of existing fences
- Retaining walls under 4 feet (measured from the bottom of the footing)
- Residing and reroofing (call Building Safety to verify)
- Swing sets and playground equipment
- Minor non-structural roof repairs
- Window and door replacements/inserts (Exception: Egress windows and safety glazing)
- Landscaping (exception: Retaining walls over 4 feet)
- Arbors and Pergolas that stand alone and without solid roofing

Building Inside

- Painting
- Wallpapering
- Trim work
- Floor covering
- Cabinets and countertops (electrical, plumbing And mechanical permits may be required)
- Replacing
- Data and telephone wiring

Plumbing

- Removal and reinstallation or repair of existing water closets (toilets) or faucets
- The clearing of stoppages or repair of leaks in pipes or valves provided the repair does not involve replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures
- Repair or replacement of clothes washers, dishwashers or similar appliances not permanently connected to the plumbing system provided the work does not require alteration of any piping
- Installation or repair of an irrigation system down stream of the backflow preventer.

***Please note that Planning Department approval MAY be required for projects constructed on your property. Please contact the Planning Department (507)328-7100 before you proceed with any exterior alteration.

This is not a complete list of all types of projects, please contact Building Safety at 507-328-2600 with any questions regarding your building project or go to our website <http://www.rochestermn.gov/departments/bldgsafety>

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIRING A BUILDING CONTRACTOR

Home construction projects can be a big investment. Choosing a residential contractor is one of the most important decisions for a homeowner to so their project is successful. Homeowners should do some homework prior to hiring a contractor.

Homeowners should ask residential contractors the following questions to make an informed decision.

- References of former customers to check if the work done was acceptable
- Contractor's license number
- Contractor's address
- Contractor's business phone
- Contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at (651) 284-5069 or (800) 342-5354 to verify that the contractor's license is valid and if there are any past violations. The status of the contractor's license can also be verified at <https://secure.doli.state.mn.us/lookup/licensing.aspx>
- Check with the state court system to verify any litigation history at <http://pa.courts.state.mn.us/default.aspx>
- Get written bids from more than one contractor

For additional information regarding hiring a residential contractor see the following websites.

<http://www.dli.mn.gov/ccld/RBCConsumer.asp>

http://www.dli.mn.gov/ccld/PDF/rbc_consumer_contractor.pdf

<https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Brochures/pubCitizensGuidetoHomeBuilding.pdf>

**ACCELA CITIZEN ACCESS**

Did you know you can find most of the information in the City's database regarding permits and inspections, as well as information about property and rental licenses by simply navigating to the Citizen Access portion on the Building Safety Department's website?

<https://aca.rochestermn.gov/citizenaccess>